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League of Nations will live. Already it is impossible to think of the world without it. But it would be childish to expect miracles from it. Individ-

uals are impatient, because their spell of life is short, but collective bodies develop slowly because their life has no limits."

The First Year and a Half of the League of Nations

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THE question as to just what the League of Nations has accomplished in its first eighteen months goes straight to the root of international relationships. If, by and large, the results are good, it means that the nations have taken the first step, however halting, along a new line of progress; if not, they must retrace their way and seek a fundamentally different relationship.

The question is infinitely difficult to answer. Exaggerated not less by its friends than by its enemies, its activities reported in a fragmentary and often contradictory way, the League has no common standard of measurement by which it may be judged. Yet such a standard must be found in order dispassionately to assess the degree of fulfilment of what is undoubtedly the greatest ideal born of the war.

The League has not sprung into being complete nor yet by the scientific process of building one story upon another. Quite on the contrary it has come forth, so to speak, almost by spontaneous outgrowth within its various elements. Here necessity has led to one action, there to another, until a series of activities have sprung up over which only now is it becoming possible to spread a common roof.

Undoubtedly the greatest fact of the League is that for the first time forty-eight nations are bound together in an organization, the cardinal obligation

of which is that no nation shall go to war without having first had recourse to arbitration or conciliation. This single agreement fulfils hopes cherished for long years before the World War and may be claimed alone to justify the League. But by itself it is not enough. If peace may be preserved by a blanket agreement not to go to war without arbitration, it may more certainly, if with greater difficulty, be preserved by removing the causes of war. The preservation of peace, moreover, is not the only ideal on the road to human happiness; it is indeed but the first essential to those other conditions necessary to the full expression of civilization.

Some kind of general, coöperative international machinery must therefore be created. Whether or not the League has succeeded in doing that may be taken, then, as the measure of its success or failure. Against this very general, all-inclusive standard, all else is individual or incidental. It is not by the outcome of any specific plan or project that the League should be judged but rather on the broad question as to whether or not a scaffolding has been set up, however rough it may be, about which the nations may construct an edifice looking first to the preservation of peace and second to the betterment of world conditions by international coöperation. To answer that question it is necessary to go through the whole organization step

by step, trying to evaluate not only what each part has already done and the means by which it has done it, but also to foresee what, under better world conditions, it may do.

LEAGUE ORGANIZATIONS

At the top of League organization are three general bodies, the Assembly, Council and Secretariat, which may be called upon to deal with any questions within the realm of international affairs. Of these the most important is the Assembly, an annual world meeting ground where each of the forty-eight states of the League is represented by three delegates. This body may become in a very real sense the register of world judgment. If by its composition it is too big, too clumsy, too occasional in meeting to go far into details, it is for these same reasons the ideal medium for focussing world public opinion on problems such as the Armenian massacres, the need of disarmament, or the desirability of a world court.

The initial meeting, held in Geneva from November 15 to December 18, was the first gathering of the nations under a written constitution. Though drawn together from the far corners of the world, it settled down almost immediately into a smooth-running, parliamentary body with a clearly defined purpose and conscience. Impossible as it is to detail here all the work done in its thirty-one public sessions and fifty committee meetings, one fact we may stress; namely, that after it had had opportunity for three full weeks to demonstrate its usefulness, it decided, unanimously and almost spontaneously, that it should reconvene every year on the first Monday in September. Hence the old days when the Hague Conferences came together now and then on the mere whim of an individual have gone for good and the

world now has an automatic meeting once a year.

Next of the organizations created by the League is the Council, a small body consisting of representatives of the four principal powers and of four lesser powers, the latter elected at intervals by the Assembly, and consisting at the moment of Spain, Brazil, Belgium and China; in other words a body of five Europeans, two Asiatics and one South American. Whether or not one accepts the theory that in practical affairs the big powers must be assured a permanent seat in the Council, it is hardly possible to deny the need of a small executive body to make the current decisions and meet the special emergencies constantly arising.

The Council, while frequently attacked, has done most valuable work. Indeed, it carried the League on during the nine months before the Assembly met; it laid out the general form of League organization; and, significantly enough, though there were strong currents of opposition to it in the Assembly, it was made the general executor of the Assembly's decisions. In its first year and a half the Council, through twelve sessions held in Paris, London, Rome, San Sebastian, Brussels, and Geneva, has developed into a business-like organization, meeting perhaps every two months, but capable of immediate convocation to provide that method of quick conference which Sir Edward Grey in vain endeavored to bring together in August of 1914.

Alongside these two bodies has been set up the international Secretariat, one of the most unique organizations in the world. Here, nearly three hundred people from over a score of nations are working together not in any sense as national representatives, but, as nearly as this imperfect world allows, as impartial experts. Despite

all differences in tongue, race and tradition, this medley of nationalities does its task quietly and efficiently, provides all the necessary expert service, prepares all meetings, carries on the day-to-day work, and executes the decisions of the Assembly and the Council.

Such an organization means speed. Instead of the old exhausting practice of sending notes around the circle of the foreign offices there is now a central body charged with expediting all business accepted as common to the nations. Thus a project like that of the court of justice, instead of being allowed to lapse, is pressed on, by a permanent organization, step by step in its progress towards realization. Similarly, if Poland desires a commission on typhus, if Sweden and Finland are to settle a dispute by arbitration, or if a small advance is needed to organize the international credit scheme, there is a small fund quickly available in the League treasury. It is gratifying to note that of the first budget, ninety-seven and one-half per cent has been paid in; of the second budget seventy-five per cent has been paid in within the first six months; and of the third budget of about \$4,000,000—for that is what it is costing forty-eight nations annually to have a League—six states paid before the accounts had been out a month.

Of the special organizations being created by the League, undoubtedly the most important, is the permanent court of international justice. For long years it has been a world ideal to create a court composed of impartial judges, always open for disputes between nations, evolving judgments not on diplomatic considerations but on actual law, and serving as a means of building up a uniform international practice. Yet until the League came into being it had proved wholly im-

possible to agree on how to select say twelve judges from among nearly fifty nations. The League, however, succeeded where previous attempts, at The Hague especially, had failed. Its committee of jurists, of whom Mr. Elihu Root was the dominating figure, found a solution based on the existing League structure. The demand of the big powers for a permanent seat on the court and the refusal of the little powers to recognize any infraction of their equality as sovereign states was harmonized by an ingenious system of double selection by the Assembly and the Council whereby big and little powers were given an adequate check upon each other.

This project was adopted first by the Council and then by the Assembly with one important deletion. The provision for compulsory adjudication, which was felt to be a greater yielding of national sovereignty than the nations were willing to make, was replaced by an optional agreement which may be signed separately if desired. Immediately twenty-eight nations signed the project and the long process of ratification by the parliaments was begun. Meanwhile, in order that the judges may be selected next fall in case sufficient ratifications have been received, the Secretariat has taken steps for their provisional nomination. The United States, it may be added, has been invited to join this court whether or not it adheres to the League.

Three other organizations, the so-called technical organizations on health, communications and transit, and economics and finance, which have been working in rough committee form for a considerable time, have been formally authorized by the first Assembly and are now in process of evolution. They are in no sense political, but seek rather to bring together international experts to secure the greatest measure

of coöperation without infringing upon national sovereignty. They are to be organized along the lines of a periodic world conference, a smaller executive committee, and a permanent secretariat, and will fulfil the triple task of interchanging information, of drafting international agreements for consideration by the various parliaments, and of facilitating international coöperation in a crisis.

Of the three, the financial and economic commission is the furthest developed. When last summer the nations of Europe were approaching bankruptcy, this body of experts prepared the Brussels Financial Conference, where it may with justice be said that, with thirty-five nations present, including the United States and the ex-enemy countries, a collection of financial data wholly unprecedented was brought out. The wide publicity given the Conference together with the education afforded the delegates by a world interchange of views made it inevitable that many national policies should be shaped along new and more healthy channels.

Moreover, a concrete plan of international credits known as the *Ter Meulen* scheme was adopted to provide temporary credits for restarting the wheels of industry, especially in the new eastern European countries. Sir Drummond Fraser had just been named general director in March when the Allied powers were forced to admit the failure of their policy in Austria. By an extraordinary memorandum, they turned over the whole problem to the League, postponing all claims against Austria on condition that that country accept the League's credit scheme. In other words, Austria was changed from a hopeless bankrupt under the merciless pressure of reparations into an international invalid in the hands of an expert committee

representing a world organization of which Austria herself was a full member. The financial commission at once laid down detailed conditions on which alone it could accept the task with any hope of success, and while awaiting the various replies has sent a special commission of investigation to Vienna.

Second in development is the transit organization, the necessity of which is based not only on the many complex transit questions arising out of the peace treaties, but even more on the fact that the political readjustments, especially in carving out so many new national frontiers at a time when commerce is assuming an always wider sweep, make a technical centre for conference essential.

The first work undertaken was an attack upon the irritating restrictions on travel and commerce surviving from the war. A conference held at Paris recommended to all governments to reduce passport fees, simplify passport and customs procedure, and clear away many of the purely bureaucratic obstacles to free circulation. Though not binding, these findings were received with such public approval that they are being adopted one by one by the different countries.

Second, and far more ambitious, was the conference of forty nations at Barcelona to work out a series of draft conventions which should, if subsequently ratified, provide for equal opportunity on international arteries of commerce. It was felt that there are certain minimum rights of transit which all nations are willing to admit and which can therefore be safeguarded by treaty. Agreement was reached on a very large part of the program; a feeling of mutual interest and interdependence created; a small consultative staff organized; and reason given to hope that the various governments will soon write the agreements into law.

The third technical organization is that of health, the importance of which in this day of world-circling steamers and ocean-to-ocean trains when humanity is on the move as never before, need not be stressed. The League, after long negotiation, is holding a conference this spring for the final acceptance of a plan whereby the *Bureau International d'Hygiene Publique*, founded at Rome in 1907, may add its technical experience to the broad influence of the League to create a general organization whereby the nations may interchange information as to new preventive measures, secure immediate news of epidemics, and unite if necessary in common action.

Such an emergency has already arisen. Great armies of men seething back and forth across Poland had steeped that country in a typhus epidemic too widespread for the local authorities to control. The League at once sent an epidemic commission to the spot, secured contributions of over a million dollars from twenty-two nations including Canada, Japan, Persia, Siam, and South America, and established sentinel hospitals on the Polish frontiers.

Another alleviation of human misery centred about the half million prisoners of war left derelict in Central Europe and Russia. Dr. Fridtjof Nansen was put in charge of the problem; credits were secured from the western European governments; routes of repatriation were opened; a fleet of ships under a League charter plied back and forth on the Baltic and from Hamburg to Vladivostock, until up to the present over 300,000 of these hapless men have been returned home.

Quite similar to the technical organizations is the international labor office, which, though not part of the League, is intimately associated with it. It consists of a general conference of all members, a governing body of represen-

tatives of government, capital and labor from the chief industrial states, and a permanent office at Geneva of about two hundred and fifty people. It may be said, within its short life, to have done more than all previous international attempts combined to better the condition of labor along certain generally conceded liberal lines. The conventions for the eight-hour day, for the limitation of night work, for the protection of women and children in industry, and for the control of dangerous processes, considered at its first conference at Washington, were approved as draft treaties with no obligation except their submission within a year to the proper treaty-making body in each country. They came forth, however, with sufficient authority to set in motion legislative machinery all over the world, so that little by little these minimum labor principles are becoming general international practice, and the liberal countries are being protected against those of backward labor legislation.

Besides these very broad technical organizations are several other permanent advisory committees of a more detailed and less powerful nature. The first two are created by the covenant to advise the Council in specific duties. The older is the military, naval and air commission composed of three officers of each state on the Council and interested in questions such as the reduction of armaments, the use of poison gas and the exchange of military information. The second is the permanent mandates commission, which will be described later. Another permanent committee recently created is that on the suppression of the opium traffic. This humanitarian work, originally supervised by Holland, has now been entrusted to the League as the first existing general international work to be coördinated with it in accordance

with the covenant. The states especially interested, including the United States, have been invited to a general conference this spring at Geneva and a small technical committee, upon which Mrs. Hamilton Wright of New York has agreed to serve, has been appointed.

Of similar humanitarian appeal is the effort being made to prevent international traffic in women and children, which it is feared may greatly increase as hunger drives more and more people abroad. An appeal has been issued for ratification of the 1910 convention regulating the admission and return of prostitutes; a questionnaire has been sent out regarding the traffic and the measures of prevention; and a conference of all nations including America has been called for June 30 at Geneva to discuss further measures and to set up a small committee.

RÔLE OF THE LEAGUE

Having analyzed the permanent bodies now existing or evolving, we may turn to a decidedly different kind of work, namely direct and indirect international administration. Here in the Saar Valley, the City of Danzig, and the former German and Turkish colonies, the peace conference has had to turn to the League as the only feasible means of harmonizing utterly conflicting principles.

The most direct administration undertaken is in the Saar Valley, a rich coal area of about 600,000 people, most of whom are German. The peace conference was here confronted by a bitter conflict between the just demands of France for reparation for Germany's wanton destruction of her Lens coal fields and the overwhelming German nationality of the inhabitants. A solution was found whereby the mines were turned over to the French and the district placed under the administration of the League for the

fifteen years necessary to repair the Lens mines, after which the inhabitants shall choose by plebiscite between the League, Germany and France.

Among the League's first official acts was the creation of a governing commission composed of a French, Sarrois, Belgian, Danish and Canadian member. During the most difficult period of transition, this commission, with complete powers of government, has proved as satisfactory to the inhabitants as could be expected, while at the same time reconciling the opposite purposes of France and Germany; so also Danzig, essential as an access to the sea for Poland's 25,000,000 people but predominantly German in character. Here again the peace conference, distracted by Poland's economic rights and Danzig's rights of nationality, struck a not unhappy compromise by reëstablishing Danzig in her old position as a free city under the protection of the League. This solution has confronted the League with many complex questions, for it has had to appoint the high commissioner of the city, forbid the manufacture of arms, request amendments to the proposed illiberal and undemocratic constitution, and consider the military protection of the city. The city, however, is now successfully launched, with the League serving as arbiter between its conflicting interests.

Less direct in administration, but far more important, are the vast areas in Turkey, Africa, and the Pacific, where perhaps 13,000,000 backward people formerly subject to Turkey or Germany have been put under the protection of the League in mandated areas entrusted to various nations as "a sacred trust of civilization." It is easy to scoff at this arrangement, to call it only slightly veiled annexation, or perhaps the same old game of colonial exploitation under a new and

idealistic name, but if these things eventuate, they will do so only because the world's moral conscience has proved utterly unheeding. There are sufficient restrictions in the Covenant and the mandate terms to introduce a wholly new era of government for the benefit of the governed. Already indeed the mere institution of the system has served as a check upon the more shameless exploiters and as a rallying ground for those who want good government in these areas.

The League is now inaugurating its powers of supervision. While it must be stressed that it was the principal powers and not the League which allotted the mandates among various nations, it is the League which has final authority in fixing the terms of those mandates and seeing that they are lived up to. In December the draft mandates for German southwest Africa and the Pacific colonies were approved and the mandates for Central Africa and Turkey would have been approved in February but for the American note and the departure to the Near East of Mr. Churchill, British Colonial Minister.

The machinery set up for the supervision of the mandates gives ground for hope. Every year the mandatory powers must submit a report of their administration to the Permanent Mandates Commission, upon which world public opinion can bring direct pressure. This commission, it should be noted, is composed not of representatives of governments, but of colonial experts serving as individuals, and comprising a majority of nationals of states not holding mandates.

Springing from the same generous impulse is the obligation to safeguard certain minimum rights to large religious, linguistic, or racial minorities cut adrift among oppressive majorities in that patchwork of peoples that is

eastern Europe. If experience be any guide, the network of treaties woven since the war about Poland, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Jugo-Slavia, Greece, Finland and Albania would be valueless without some central agency for their supervision. The League would not willingly have sought this task, and may be expected to act only sparingly, and indeed, only on the formal demand of an outside state, but its mere presence, even the mere study now going on in the Secretariat, will in itself prove a check against too gross a violation of principles which all men approve.

Now about open diplomacy. Entirely apart from the more frank international relations brought about by the wide-open sessions of the Assembly, and by the financial, transit, and labor conferences, the League is fulfilling one function which should go a long way towards ending secret treaties between nations. In an effort to destroy a system which proved so vicious during the war, the covenant provides that no treaty shall be binding until registered with the League. Within the first ten months there were received and published in the *Special Treaty Series* no less than one hundred treaties, including such vital agreements as the note on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the San Remo Oil Agreement, the political terms of the Franco-Belgian Military Agreement, and the British-Soviet Trade Agreement. The importance of this central treaty registration and publication can hardly be exaggerated.

It is in the field of disarmament that the League has as yet been least successful. This is true largely because that confidence between nations, on which alone disarmament can be based, has not yet been established. With Germany still recalcitrant, with eastern Europe disordered, with the

Bolsheviki still a military danger, and with President Wilson having refused the invitation to coöperate, the lack of results is not surprising. Nevertheless, what little has been done in the world for disarmament has been done by the League. The Brussels Conference immensely stimulated the financial pressure for reduction; the Assembly laid down a series of modest proposals covering the maximum the nations were willing to accept at the time; and shortly a very powerful committee consisting of financial, economic, labor, military and political leaders will meet to see whether a more complete program can not be evolved.

It will be asked, what has the League done to prevent wars? In the case of Poland's invasion of Russia a year ago, it did nothing, largely because none of its members requested it to do anything. Nowhere has this inaction been more bitterly criticised than in the Assembly itself, where it became apparent that Poland's policy had had at least the silent approval of the western governments. So long as a great power like Russia remains an international outcast, such occurrences are almost inevitable.

Apart from this, however, five cases of threatened war have already come before the League, two of them very directly and three slightly. The first, Persia's appeal in the face of a Bolshevik invasion, may be briefly dismissed as direct negotiations between the two parties effected a settlement and left the case without importance except as showing for the first time how the League's machinery for conciliation could be set in motion. Far more serious is the Aland Islands case. Here Great Britain, a third party without interest except that of preserving peace, asked the League to intercede in a dispute between Sweden and Finland over these important strategic

islands, which, though inherited by Finland from the former Russian Duchy of Finland, are predominantly inhabited by Swedes. The Council at a special meeting heard the statements of both nations, secured a solemn promise from each not to break the peace, and appointed an international commission, of which Mr. Abraham Elkus of New York was a member, which immediately visited the islands, as well as Finland and Sweden, to take testimony on the spot. During all these months the peace has been kept because both parties knew that the case was being handled in a fair and impartial way, and there is every reason to hope that the final outcome may be to remove once and for all this most serious source of friction.

Less satisfactory has been the Polish-Lithuanian mediation, largely because of the intransigent and hostile feelings shown by both parties. The League had already been called in between the two countries and had an international military commission on the spot when General Zeligowski made his theatrical *coup d'état* against Vilna. As the Polish government immediately disclaimed him as a rebel, the League proposed a plebiscite based on Zeligowski's withdrawal and his replacement by an international force.

In response to a special request, not only France, Great Britain and Belgium, former belligerents, but also Spain, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, former neutrals, agreed to send small contingents of troops for this police work. Meanwhile, however, both Poland and Lithuania raised difficulties, until finally the Council decided that, as neither of the parties was prepared to take the action required to make a just plebiscite possible, the plan must be abandoned and direct negotiations at Brussels under a League chairman substituted. Whether there

will result a peaceful solution between two nations who seem little disposed to one, is still uncertain, but at least hostilities have long been averted which without the League would have been almost inevitable, and the healthful moral opinion of the outside world has had opportunity to bring pressure on both parties.

The other two cases are South and Central America. Bolivia and Peru desired to present their Tacna-Arica dispute with Chile to the first Assembly, but Peru shortly withdrew it and Bolivia postponed the request to the next meeting. Similarly Panama immediately notified the League of her friction with Costa Rica, and then as a result of a direct invitation from the Council, both nations submitted their views, without, however, invoking League action because of the mediation already undertaken by the United States.

These two cases have been disturbing to the League. On the one hand is the certainty that League opponents in the United States will stretch the situation into an invasion of the Monroe Doctrine. On the other is the undoubted fact that all these nations as members of the League have accepted the obligation not to go to war without arbitration or conciliation; that as sovereign states they have the right to call upon an outside body to mediate; and that in fact they are largely appealing to their fellow South Americans who constitute sixteen of the forty-eight states in the League. Were America a member of the League, she would undoubtedly be entrusted with mediation in such cases.

Such, then, is the varied rôle of the League, a maze of widely different activities all leading to the one central goal of better international relations and the abolition of war. If the outline sounds formidable, it can not be

too often stressed that practically all this work is purely advisory and consultative; that the League lives only because it is a useful channel for coöperation and conference, and because, above all, it does not attack the sovereignty of its members.

There indeed lies its central truth. It has found the narrow, difficult channel between a mere debating society without influence and an organization having the attributes of a super-state. It has no power of legislation; no power of enforcing its findings; no power to move a single soldier or raise a single dollar without the consent of the nations concerned. It is rather a central clearing-house for coöperative action, ready to function in a dispute like the Aland Islands, to relieve a human tragedy such as the half million derelict war prisoners, or to bring the experts of the world together before a world financial crisis.

Nor is the League a separate personality. It acts not on its own initiative, but on that of its members; it comes to decisions not out of some detached, super-judgment of its own, but through the free consent of the nations in it; it acts or fails to act as its members see fit. This should be appreciated because oftentimes the League is blamed for inaction which is due solely to the inaction of its members, especially of the small states which, protesting the power of the big states, seem to lack courage to use the machinery before them.

Nor, again, is the League an instrument for enforcing the peace treaties. The Allied governments have preferred to preserve absolute freedom of movement, while the Germans have even appealed to the League on several occasions against Allied action. Indeed, apart from certain instances such as the Saar Valley and Danzig where it has been called in not so much to

enforce as to ameliorate the peace conditions, the League is anxious to keep free of treaty complications and confine itself to the field of world organization and readjustment. This is all the more necessary because its membership is far bigger than the Allied group, including as it does all the six European neutrals, the two ex-enemy states of Austria and Bulgaria, and nearly the whole of South America.

What the future holds no man can say. Slowly the League is finding its sphere of usefulness and bringing down early exaggerations to the realm of reality. It is neither a perfect nor a final organization, but it is a beginning. Even as this is being written, its covenant is being examined by an

amendments committee, and other committees are studying treaty registration, the economic blockade and the efficiency of the Secretariat.

The fact of a coöperative international association seems, however, now firmly embedded in world relations, be its power greater or less, and its name what you will. The present organization, entirely apart from the many and great incidental benefits which it has conferred along its line of progress, has proved an idea which, whatever its outward form and symbols, represents the fundamental conviction of mankind that conference and conciliation will eventually lead the world to the final goal of preventing armed strife between nations.